

## The GOVERNOR'S LADY

A Novelization of ALICE BRADLEY'S Play  
By GERTRUDE STEVENSON

Illustrations from Photographs of the Stage Production

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By DAVID BELASCO

Conscious of the song, Mary remembered the lamb stew that she had left cooking on the kitchen fire. Dan had always loved lamb stew; that is, her lamb stew. She remembered how heartily he always ate of it, how he never failed to pass his plate for a second "helping," and how he used to look up at her and say:

"This is lapping good, Mary. I think I will have a bit more."

Just as if he needed any urging! Mary found her thoughts growing very tender when she suddenly remembered that tonight she must sit alone at the table, that instead of two she would only serve one plateful of that stew. Her heart contracted with a pathetic, futile longing for things as "they used to be," and grew bitter as she remembered conditions as they were. She sat with her face pillowed on her arms, so absorbed in her unhappy reflections that she didn't hear the door open, didn't hear a step until someone leaned over and kissed her tenderly on the faded cheek that Dan used to pat so lovingly and declare was lovelier than their garden roses.

"Oh, Rob!" Mary exclaimed, starting up in glad surprise. "I didn't hear you drive up."

"I didn't," Rob laughed, good-naturedly. "My car is stranded two blocks back," and he threw his linen duster on the sofa as Mary hastened in her fond little way to take his hand and hover about him.

"It's strange how near town this place seems to be," Rob rattled on. "When we lived here before it was clear out in the country, but with a motor car it's right next door to town."

"Well, aunt," and he stretched himself out in an easy chair, "I suppose it's like heaven to you to get back here to the old home you lived in so many years!"

"Yes," Mary agreed, rather indifferently.

"Any of the old neighbors left, I'd like to see them—some of 'em?"

"I never noticed before how many questions old neighbors could ask, Rob," Mary sighed, as she recounted the curious visions of her old friends, who had inquired anxiously and repeatedly for Mr. Slade, how he was getting on, and when he would be down, and a dozen other questions in the phraseology of people who, as old friends, take the liberty of coming as near as possible to demanding that you unburden your soul to them on the spot. "You'll kind of have to dodge 'em, Rob. I don't know when I've lied so. What do you think of a man who forces a woman to lie?"

"Well," Hayes hated the old subject, hated the thought of Mary dwelling continually on her unhappiness. "Didn't they know about Slade?" and he began to toy with the spoons of thread that Mary had been using for the inevitable sewing that had so annoyed her husband.

"Either they don't know or they want to find out more than they already know," Mary answered, wearily. "So I sit here lying and lying."

"You intend to stick it out and stay here?"

"Yes," Mary answered with a quiet determination.

"Well, he can't call this desertion," Hayes went on. "You own this house together. It's your home as well as his."

"Yes," agreed Mary, "but it's awful fighting my husband. What's the matter with you, Bob? You used to tell me a lot about Miss Strickland, and lately you—have you had any trouble?" she asked, forgetting her own sorrow at the thought of the possible unhappiness of this young man whom she loved as tenderly as if he had been her own son.

"Don't let us talk about her," Bob objected.

"All right, Robert," Mary attempted to be cheery as she saw how abstracted and dejected Bob was. "Dinner will be ready in a minute and you can sit right down."

"I won't give in to him!" she declared as she put on an extra plate and knife and fork. "I'll never give him that divorce."

"Don't you ever think of anything else?" Hayes questioned, soberly.

"No, it's no use, Robert; I get hot and cold hating my husband when I think how he is treating me. I know it's wrong, but I do! Sometimes when I wake up suddenly in the night and see the old room and remember that he's living at his club and enjoying life and—see here miserable, I just get sick hating him."

"Now, auntie"—Hayes was anxious to divert her attention—"I wouldn't think of that. You have the best of him. You've got him beaten. I have a good lawyer for you, and he'll be out to see you today. You know I'd take the case myself, but it wouldn't be professional. You've positively made up your mind to fight the divorce to a finish!"

"Tooth and nail!" Mary's answer came through set teeth.

"Then you've got him. He can't fight a woman in the courts in his position, with his nomination before him."

"I've got him, have I?" Mary was all eagerness now.

"You're sure of it? Was he very mad about my coming here? Has my lawyer seen his lawyer?"

Hayes answered the last of her many questions first. "They met today."

"Did you get two lawyers, Rob?"

"Yes, I got two. I got a whole firm."

"Do you think I need another—no's to be sure?"

Hayes laughed.

"You have all you need, auntie."

"Thank God, I got the telephone in so they can call me up." Mary was almost feverish in her excitement. "I couldn't go on the witness stand. He doesn't know that, though. Any signs

of Dan going back to the house, now I'm out of it!"

The bell that never hesitates to interrupt at any moment rang insistently. Mary jumped about in her excitement and finally took down the receiver. She dropped it as hastily and backed away.

"You'd better answer it, Rob."

"It's Slade," Bob declared, holding his hand over the transmitter. "He wants to talk to you."

"No, sir!" Mary was vehement. "Cut him off! I ain't going to talk to him. I've got two lawyers. Tell him to have his lawyer talk to mine. My heart's so hard against him—I couldn't listen to the sound of my own voice," and she sank weakly into a chair as Hayes continued to converse with Slade. "No, she says not," he was saying. "No, I am not out here winding her up or advising her," and he banged up the receiver.

"What'd he say?" Mary was wringing her hands in her uncontrollable excitement.

"Oh, he just called me a skunk and cut off," answered Hayes, as he nonchalantly lighted a cigarette. He paced up and down the room for a moment and then turned on her:

"God! I'd like to haul him through every court in the country. The scoundrel!"

"I don't like to hear you talk like that about him, Rob," Mary remonstrated. "He's been a pretty good friend to you."

"Well, perhaps," Hayes tried to calm herself for her sake. "He's all right, I suppose."

"I dunno that he is," Mary's mood was variable. "When I think of that divorce—"

"Slade's coming down here today,

auntie. He declares you're here under his very eyes, and he's determined that you shall go away, and desert him and give him the opportunity to divorce you. He says the whole country will know of the trouble unless you go away. That's what he said over the phone."

"Well, I'll stay right here. I can't get over it, Rob," and her voice quivered in spite of herself. "I can't get over the suddenness of it; his wanting that divorce happened just like that," and she snapped her fingers to illustrate her meaning. "Before that he never thought of it. It's curious," she paused, thoughtfully; "do you know that sometimes when I get to thinking about it—something comes over me, an idea that—shut that outside door, Rob," she commanded before she would continue. "I wonder if there isn't—I declare I'm ashamed to say it—but I wonder if it could be possible that there's—some woman," she finally managed to get the word out.

"Auntie!" It was not necessary for Hayes to feign surprise, for, although he knew the situation, he had been confident that such a thought had never entered Mary Slade's pure-minded thoughts.

The pent-up emotion of days broke, and Mary sank sobbing into a chair, burying her face in her hands. With the expression of the thought that heretofore she had never admitted even to herself, her self-control vanished and she cried out desperately:

"Well, what do you think he wanted that divorce for so suddenly?"

"People usually do get divorced when they can't get on. Don't they?"

Hayes was willing to lie to shield her from the knowledge that he knew would be the bitterest part of all the wormwood that she had already tasted.

"Sometimes I wonder," Mary continued, reflectively, "sometimes I'm almost positive that—No! Slade isn't that sort of a man. My husband isn't that sort of a man, Rob."

"No, of course he isn't."

"You didn't know what I was going to say," she objected.

"Yes, I did. About women."

"He never noticed any other woman," she told herself positively.

"No," Hayes agreed.

"You haven't heard of anything like that, have you?" she questioned.

"No, no, I haven't," Hayes was finding the cross-examination extremely trying, convinced as he was that Mary must be saved from the knowledge of Katherine at any cost. "If there were anything, you'd hear it. Don't worry."

"Robert," and she looked at him intently. "Would you tell me if—"

"No, I would not!" asserted Hayes vigorously. "Haven't you got enough trouble now?"

"But, Robert, you are my friend, aren't you? You ought to—"

He was saved from any further questions along that unwelcome line by the sound of the doorbell and a moment later Merritt opened the door without ceremony.

"Well!" Hayes was far from cordial.

"I beg your pardon for entering so abruptly," Merritt was the same old talkative, suave, good-fellow, in-your-friend-Merritt, "but I was bound to see Mrs. Slade. I'm for the Slade family—

but I'm for all the Slade family, so I hope you won't make a stranger of me."

Mary was politely indifferent and Hayes, with back turned, was tapping his foot uneasily on the floor. Altogether not the warmest welcome a man ever received.

"This man is likely to publish anything you may say, auntie," Hayes warned over his shoulder.

"Oh, come now, Hayes," objected Merritt. "I'm here on a perfectly friendly visit. I well remember this little place," and he looked about. "I stopped here some years ago and Mr. Slade brought up a drink of water. Slade was in his shirt-sleeves, I remember. Big man, Slade!" and he eyed Mrs. Slade inquiringly. "Big man!" he exclaimed again as Mary remained silent, her features giving no clew to her feelings.

"Well, my wife has gone off to Eu-



"You Are Going to Oppose the Divorce?"

rope on a long-extended tour." Merritt was determined to make conversation if he had to do it alone. "I'm quite alone. In fact, we're in the same boat—alone."

"I'm not," Hayes burst forth. "Thank God, I've got my troubles, but I'm not married, so I'm not quite alone."

Merritt laughed good-naturedly, glad at any kind of response.

"Pardon me, Hayes," he cleared his throat nervously. "I'd like to talk with Mrs. Slade."

"Oh, all right," and with his hands thrust into his pockets, Hayes strolled leisurely into the kitchen.

"My dear little woman," Merritt be-

gan in his most engaging manner, as soon as Hayes had left the room. "You have my deepest sympathy and most profound respect. Your position is touching. If you'll excuse me for saying it, I can see your side of it, too. Now the point is this: A week ago when you called at the senator's house, Slade had just said you were going East to live permanently. I must say very few women—very few—would do as much for a man. For instance, Mrs. Merritt, I know, wouldn't. I needn't tell you that the whole community will admire you for your reserved dignity—if you go, Mrs. Slade."

"I'm not going," Mary's voice was ominously quiet.

"You're going to oppose the divorce?"

"Yes," came the soft answer.

"Mrs. Slade," Merritt began, and took a quick, apprehensive look in the

direction of the kitchen. "Take a hint from me! You give it to him! Soak it to him! He's used you like a dog! I came here today to find out if you meant to fight him. I had an idea that you did. I'll help you do him up."

"You're talking against the man I lived with most of my life," and she fixed an angry eye on him. "You get right out of my house, sir."

"Go right along, sir! Go along!" and Mary raised her voice as her temper got the better of her.

Hayes, hearing the loud tones, appeared at the kitchen door munching a biscuit.

"How dare you!" he heard Mary exclaim. "You can't abuse my husband to me!"

Merritt looked once at Hayes and once at Mary. Then he went.

Hayes stood taking large bites out of the biscuit, looking at Mary with an air of sad smile.

"I'll say all I want about Slade," Mary spluttered. "But I won't let anyone else do it."

"I've noticed that," returned Hayes, dryly.

"And I can tend to my own affairs, too."

"I've noticed that, too," still dryly.

"I'm kind of wound up," Mary confessed. "I'll just wash my face and cool off. Then we'll have dinner, Rob."

She had no sooner left the room than a knock came at the door. It appeared to be Mary Slade's day "at home."

"Oh, the day—" muttered Rob as he started toward the door. "These d-d curious neighbors!"

He opened the door abruptly. Instead of the gossiping neighbors he had expected he was confronted by Katherine Strickland.

### CHAPTER X.

Katherine was just as much amazed at meeting Hayes as he was at finding her at the door.

"I didn't know you would be here," Katherine apologized, "otherwise I—"

Bob's expression silenced her. She had never seen such an expression in his eyes before. Katherine was radiantly beautiful today. She knew it. More than that, she had taken particular care to gown herself in an exquisite afternoon dress of dull blue, a gown that had been draped according to her own fastidious design. But in Bob's eyes there was no response to her beauty or her clothes or her poise. He didn't even attempt to disguise his disgust at her effrontery in invading Mrs. Slade's retreat.

"I want to see Mrs. Slade," Katherine finally announced.

"Upon my word!" his voice was low, but hoarse. "I never heard of such a thing as your coming to this house. What do you want here? Want to tell that little woman you're after her? What do you want here?"

"Will you kindly tell Mrs. Slade that I am here?" Katherine's eyes were hard and her mouth a thin strip of determination.

"First, I want to know what you're going to say to her," Hayes demanded.

"Whether I say it today or tomorrow doesn't matter," Katherine answered, quietly. "I'll say it. So you might as well let her know I'm here and go."

"All right, but do you think you had better risk it? You look out! When she discovers—" Mary's entrance at this moment checked Hayes' warning.

She looked questioning, first at Katherine, then at Hayes.

"I'll be back, auntie, in a very few minutes," Hayes remarked. "I've got to work on my car. This is Miss Strickland," and he shut the door.

"Oh—Miss Strickland," repeated

Mary, very much pleased, but very much in awe of the senator's daughter. "You called on me once before, but I had a headache. I've often wished since I hadn't had it. Won't you take off your things and sit down. It's very kind of you to call."

Katherine thanked her and sat down. She had not expected to find such a sweet little woman in Mrs. Slade. The woman was so little, so fragile, so harmless and helpless in appearance. Even the old-fashioned cottage made its appeal to the girl's sensitive spirit; the shabby furniture gave her a vision of what Slade's earlier life with this woman must have been. Instead of her usual poise, she found herself quite a little at a loss to know what to do or say before the frank, sincere gaze of Slade's wife. The questions she had meant to blurt out soon after her arrival remained muted on her lips. Instead she found herself answering the questions that Mary Slade was asking.

She found herself telling the woman of her own struggles against increasing poverty, talking of her own hopes and ambitions.

"Mrs. Slade, I don't say this is a social call," Katherine found herself as frank as the woman at the other side of the table.

"You—you know all about my trouble, Miss Strickland?"

"Yes, that's what I'd like to talk to

a minute. I'd like to talk some more. You're out in the world and I'm quite alone. People aren't as frank with me as they might be. Suppose I'm your mother—just let me say it—and my husband wanted a divorce—he's old enough to be your father—we'd all get together to find out why, wouldn't we?"

"I suppose we would," and Katherine took the chair Mrs. Slade had indicated.

"What I want to know is why people think Mr. Slade wants a divorce? Why, isn't a separation bad enough?"

"I don't know that I— For the life of her she could think of no answer to this directly simple line of questioning.

"Well, there's only one reason I ever knew of," Mary continued, "when a man's so insistent. I guess you know the kind of reason I mean—a well—a younger reason."

"You mean—a woman?" Katherine's voice was cold and firm.

"Yes, I do. It doesn't seem to surprise you," Mary declared suddenly, noting that she had in mind. "Miss Strickland, I think you know something more than you're telling me and you hate to say it. What would you do in my place?" she asked as Katherine's silence gave virtual assent.

"I?" Katherine asked vacantly. She thought a moment. Then, quickly, earnestly: "I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd do what they all do. I'd save what's left of the affection I once had. It's no use standing over a man with the end of a chain in your hand; that doesn't get him back. I'd take his money, the luxury—I'd simply—well, I'd dissolve partnership and I'd go. I'd go to some place where life interested me and get what I could out of it. I'd live as I never had lived, and I'd make him pay."

"That's a new idea to me," Mary was listening intently. "I never thought of such a thing."

"And supposing, Mrs. Slade, that another woman did appear. I don't say there is one, but—"

"But is there?" Mary persisted.

"I didn't say so. But I do know this: If we do love anyone, and they really love us, they never get over it and we never get over it, either, for there's always something in our hearts that we can't—we can't forget. And take a man who's not young, like Mr. Slade, why, no other woman could be anything at all to him—I mean anything more than something to keep up his position."

"I see," replied Mary, thoughtfully. "Someone to sit in his box at the opera—someone to go about and do him credit. Miss Strickland," she paused a moment and looked at Katherine earnestly, "there is such a woman, and you know it. I believe, Miss Strickland, I believe the Lord sent you straight here to me."

"I only came to find out what you intend doing," Katherine answered, alarmed and not knowing exactly what Mrs. Slade meant. "I mustn't trouble you any longer."

"You're no trouble at all," said Mary, detaining her. "It's the doubt that troubles me. Miss Strickland, I know perfectly well you must have heard people talking. The words I want are in your mouth. Come, now, honestly tell me, she coaxed, "who is the husky?"

"Mrs. Slade," exclaimed Katherine, haughtily, unconsciously drawing herself up.

"I ought not to have used that word, I know," Mary drew a long breath, "but I—you can't blame me. Why, do you know what it would mean? It would mean two Mrs. Slades here in this town or—anywhere he's known. Two Mrs. Slades after all these long, respectable years! Why, it isn't human!" and she held up two accusing fingers. "Oh, no! Every one would be asking: 'Which Mrs. Slade is that—the old one or the new one he got?' He'd be out with Mrs. Slade No. 2, while Mrs. Slade No. 1 was home breaking her heart. Well, they don't catch me like that! Not much! If that's what it means, there's only going to be one Mrs. Slade, and I wouldn't stoop to be that one. I fought for his name when he was free, but if he isn't now, I wouldn't hang on a man who didn't respect me enough to—No! She could take him and his name and his money and—I'd go to where people didn't know the sight of my face. Miss Strickland, there is another woman, and you know it. Out with it, like a good girl. Just

"Or I go away," Mary completed the sentence. "Yes, and if I go away—I know what that means. No, I'm not going away. Miss Strickland, you tell your father and his friends, from me—"

"Oh, no—please," Katherine objected. "I came quite alone, unknown to him."

"Well, you might as well tell him or anyone else that wants to know—"

"Oh, no, I couldn't, Mrs. Slade. I couldn't carry any messages. I came here to find out—" Katherine checked herself. The situation was suddenly becoming embarrassing.

"Well, now, you know," Mary answered, "there won't be any divorce."

"I see—yes—" and she took up her gloves, preparatory to going.

"I'm very sorry," Mary explained, "that others should suffer through this, but that's how it stands. For once in his life Dan Slade is not going to have his own way."

"Now, let's talk of something else. I hear you draw pictures of your dresses—designs. Is that one of your own gowns?"

"Oh, yes," Katherine replied, amiably. "I often do little sketches for the fashion magazines, and I do busts. My friend thinks it's a fad, when as a matter of fact, it's for money, for clothes and things."

"I had no idea," Mary was all sympathy and understanding. "You're so young and need pretty things. That's one of the joys I've missed—dressing a daughter! You know," she began, suddenly, "I've heard a great deal of you, and you're not at all the young lady I supposed you were. You're just as simple and sweet and natural as you can be. And your affection for your father!"

Mary got up, and, selecting the love-leaf rose from the cluster in the vase, carefully wiped the stem and handed it to Katherine.

"Won't you stay for a bit of dinner? Better have just a bite."

"I must go," returned Katherine absently. Somehow or other she hadn't quite expected this sort of a visit.

"I hope I haven't said anything to trouble you," she hastened to add. "What I said about this ruining Mr. Slade is just an echo of what his friends say."

"My dear child, you haven't hurt my feelings. Perhaps you know something I don't know?" she asked, suddenly. "Do sit down again. Stay just

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Katherine quailed before this sudden outburst. Then the hope of influencing the woman to divorce her husband spurred her on and she replied:

"Yes, there is."

"Is she—?" Mary was unprepared for the admission in spite of all she had said. Her voice broke—"Is she young?"

"Yes," came from Katherine. Even at that moment it occurred to her

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